

CLAIMS

1. A communications system comprising a primary station and at least one secondary station, wherein the primary station has means for broadcasting a series of inquiry messages, each in the form of a plurality of predetermined data fields arranged according to a first communications protocol, and means for adding to an inquiry message prior to transmission an additional data field for polling at least one secondary station, and wherein the or each polled secondary station has means for determining when an additional data field has been added to the plurality of data fields, for determining whether it has been polled from the additional data field and for responding to a poll when it has data for transmission to the primary station.

2. A primary station for use in a communications system comprising at least one secondary station, wherein means are provided for broadcasting a series of inquiry messages, each in the form of a plurality of predetermined data fields arranged according to a first communications protocol, and for adding to each inquiry message prior to transmission an additional data field for polling at least one secondary station.

3. A primary station as claimed in claim 2, characterised in that means are provided for adding the additional data field at the end of a respective inquiry message.

4. A primary station as claimed in claim 2, characterised in that means are provided for including an indication in one of the predetermined data fields, the indication denoting the presence of the additional data field.

5. A primary station as claimed in claim 2, characterised in that the first communications protocol comprises Bluetooth messaging.

6. A primary station as claimed in claim 2, characterised in that the additional data field comprises at least 64 bits of data.

5 7. A primary station as claimed in claim 2, characterised in that first radio means are provided for broadcasting substantially continuously inquiry messages having the additional data field and second radio means are provided for handling other aspects of communication links with secondary stations.

10 8. A secondary station for use in a communications system comprising a primary station, wherein means are provided for receiving an inquiry message broadcast by the primary station, the message being in the form of a plurality of predetermined data fields arranged according to a first communications protocol and having added to it an additional data field for
15 polling at least one secondary station, and wherein means are provided for determining when an additional data field has been added to the plurality of data fields, for determining whether it has been polled from the additional data field and for responding to a poll when it has data for transmission to the primary station.

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9. A secondary station as claimed in claim 8, characterised in that the first communications protocol comprises Bluetooth messaging.

25 10. A secondary station as claimed in claim 8, characterised in that means are provided for responding to a poll after a predetermined interval has passed without transmission of data, whether or not the secondary station has data for transmission.

30 11. A method of operating a communication system comprising a primary station and at least one secondary station, the method comprising the primary station broadcasting a series of inquiry messages, each in the form of a plurality of predetermined data fields arranged according to a first

communications protocol, and adding to an inquiry message prior to transmission an additional data field for polling at least one secondary station, and further comprising the or each polled secondary station determining when an additional data field has been added to the plurality of data fields, 5 determining whether it has been polled from the additional data field and responding to a poll when it has data for transmission to the primary station.

12. A method as claimed in claim 11, characterised in that not all inquiry messages have an additional data field for polling a secondary station 10 added to them.

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